

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

There are many things to see in a lifetime but one thing will always be your favorite. Its may be your mothers face (highly unlikely) but Death Valley is the most common “favorite place” probably in the world. Hundreds of people flock to see it and leave with happy memories and photos. Maybe you will never go there, but why not learn about it?

The weather in Death Valley is not normal. It’s got the highest temperature in North America and gets up to 120 degrees in the summer. The average rain fall is 2 inches per year. That’s small. Did you know that the temperature gets colder by three to five degrees every thousand vertical feet? The weather might give you an idea of how hard it is to for the wildlife to survive.

The wild life in this barren land is surprisingly bountiful. There are wildflower blooms in the spring. Coyotes, kangaroo rats, Horned toads, bighorn sheep and wild burrows fly, scurry, run & hop over the land and water. Ten species of snakes slither through the sand. 5 species of fish inhabit the water that’s 5 times saltier than salt water. And on top of it all there are 20 species of mammals. It’s hard to imagine that they live in such a harsh landscape.

Death Valley N.P. is located in California and the eastern end just reaches into Nevada. It is 3.3 million acres making it the largest national park in the forty eight contiguous states. Badwater Basin in the park is one of the lowest places in the world and the lowest place in North America. In certain places the park is covered in almost pure salt crystals. This place can’t be so cool without some neat history.

People started coming to Death Valley for mining silver, lead, gold & borax (a mineral with many uses). The borax deposits were found in 1873. Mining towns with names like Bullfrog, Greenwater & Skidoo sprang up almost over night. Along with the towns came 10,000 people which lived in Death Valley at one time. But it all turned into a giant dustbowl when it became national park in 1994.

Death Valley is a fascinating place; a true gift from nature.

By, Bryce Workman